

HOW CAN THE ARMY BETTER TRAIN AT
THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL?

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

HOW CAN THE ARMY BETTER TRAIN AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL? by MAJ Donn H. Hill, 50 pages.

How can the Army train better at the operational level? This question addresses a lack of training at the operational level that has only become apparent in recent years. One of the reasons for such a shortcoming has been the reluctance of the US Army to acknowledge the operational level of war fighting. Real debate evolved during the 1980's and FM 100-5, *Operations*, did not list the operational level of war until the 1982 edition.

Acknowledging a shortcoming in operational-level training leads to the question; Is the Army's doctrine focused strictly at the tactical level? Tactical training is at the core of the Army's day-to-day existence, and it is not the suggestion of this thesis that any unit should be distracted from this critical focus. This thesis will, however, suggest that operational-level training is deficient in the Army because of a tendency to focus primarily on the tactical fight. Officers are born and raised at the tactical level, and they understand it implicitly by the time they become general officers. However, as general officers they are required to fight at the operational level, despite the fact that they have not been adequately trained to do so. The challenge is for the Army to identify the systemic flaws in its current training doctrine that allow this tendency to continue.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

Although it fought World War II at every level of war, the US Army walked away from its overwhelming victory focused on its lessons learned at the tactical level.

Recognition of the existence of the operational level of war would not emerge in the US Army's doctrine for another forty years. Once the Army recognized the operational level of war, why did it not implement training at this level?

World War II serves as an excellent benchmark for a conflict fought at every level of war. The strategic level of war was fought on the Asian and European continents and in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters amongst over one hundred nations for six years.

Within these theaters the operational level of war was prosecuted in different campaigns lasting from a few weeks to several months. Those campaigns were decided at the tactical level by the battles that were fought in the various theaters of operations for days and weeks at a time. The strategic use of nuclear weapons sealed the fate of the Japanese and ended the war.

The Korean War was a result of a strategic effort by the United States to contain communism on the Asian continent. With the exception of the Inchon operations, it was primarily a tactical fight resembling World War I more than World War II for most of its duration. Like World War II, most of the military lessons derived from the Korean War were tactical in nature. Training doctrine that had evolved with the lessons learned from World War II was further refined from the lessons learned in Korea. The division and below had been and continued to be the focus of the American Army's training doctrine.

The war in Vietnam was a counterinsurgency fought at the tactical level. While America was purported to have never lost a battle in Vietnam, it lost the war. Some have criticized the US Army's failure to see beyond the tactical level as a contributing factor to the apparent military stalemate that led to a US withdrawal and subsequent South Vietnamese collapse. Successful battles did not win the war, but the lack of a campaign plan (the operational level) in support of strategic objectives kept the war from being won. Due to this failure to achieve a victory as in World War II or even a draw as in Korea, the US Army turned in on itself for a serious evaluation of its training doctrine.

The debilitating effects of the decade-long war in Vietnam had diminished the tactical skills of the US Army, and the generation of officers who had witnessed this degradation undertook the mission of correcting it. Their corrective action resulted in the training doctrine still in place today, which focuses on task, condition, and standards from the individual task of a soldier up to and including the collective tasks of a division. Training is evaluated by extensive "Mission Training Plans" that cover every task that should be completed to successfully accomplish the mission. Soldier and unit proficiency at the tactical level has increased over time and has been sustained at a very high level using this model. What has been overlooked is the next level of training, the operational level.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance and the defense of Europe served as the proving grounds for the Army's look at a new approach to warfare during the post-Vietnam era. The apparent failure of the Army's myopic adherence to focusing on the tactical level of war led to the reemergence of theories on the operational level of war. These theories evolved into the "AirLand Battle" doctrine of the 1970s and

1980s. AirLand Battle by definition focuses on a battle, which is the tactical level of war. This doctrine brought about renewed emphasis on the combined arms fight and paved the way for the Combined Arms Training Centers (CTCs), but it failed to mesh these “battles” into a campaign or a series of campaigns.

The services have not for a long time educated their officers for theater operations--that is, for the planning, conduct and support of campaigns to achieve strategic objectives in a theater of war. The services last treated the subject systematically in the 1930's when the Army's Command and General Staff College taught theater operations as “military strategy.” In the intervening years the Army focused mainly on tactics. (Newell 1994, 174)

The operational level of war is fought over the course of several battles, within a campaign or campaigns that support the strategic objectives of the war. While the US Army's tactical training doctrine is exemplary in every aspect and the CTCs are the closest thing to actual combat that can be achieved in training, the Army needs a complimentary program at the operational level.

Scope

The purpose of this paper is to identify systemic shortcomings in operational-level training within the US Army and make recommendations for correcting these deficiencies. First, current Army training doctrine will be analyzed with the goal of determining at what level it focuses. The assumption is that this is the tactical level. Identifying shortcomings in tactical training doctrine is not the focus. Successful tactical-level training paths that can be used as examples for developing a successful operational-level training path will be sought. Second, the operational level will be defined and any training that focuses on this level will be identified and analyzed. Simulations and large-scale exercises will be addressed. The benefits and shortcomings of both will be

compared. The future capabilities of simulations will receive particular attention since the trend is for large-scale military exercises to continue to shrink in size and decrease in number. Third, whatever shortcomings have been identified will be analyzed and recommendations for addressing them will be made.

The Research Question

How can the Army take the next step in the evolution of its existing doctrine for training at the operational level? This question addresses a lack of training at the operational level that has only become apparent in recent years. One of the reasons for such a shortcoming has been the reluctance of the US Army to acknowledge the operational level of war fighting. Operational war fighting is not even listed in the primary training manuals in use by the US Army, Field Manual (FM) 25-100, *Training the Force*, and FM 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*. Operational art has only evolved in the US since the advent of “AirLand Battle” in the 1970s. Real debate evolved during the 1980s, and FM 100-5, *Operations*, did not list the operational level of war until the 1986 edition.

Acknowledging a shortcoming in operational level training leads to the question: Is the Army’s doctrine focused strictly at the tactical level? FM 25-101’s subtitle, *Battalion and Company Soldiers, Leaders and Units*, leads one to believe it is a purely tactical-level document. The predominance of all Army field manuals focuses on the tactical level, with the few corps and higher field manuals receiving attention primarily in the combat support and combat service support arenas. Tactical training is at the core of the Army’s day-to-day existence, and it is not the suggestion of this thesis that any unit should be distracted from this critical focus. This thesis will, however, suggest that

operational-level training is deficient in the Army because of a tendency to focus primarily on the tactical fight. Officers are born and raised at the tactical level, and they understand it implicitly by the time they become general officers. However, as general officers they are required to fight at the operational level, despite the fact that they have not been adequately trained to do so. The challenge is for the Army to identify the systemic flaws in its current training doctrine that allow this tendency to continue. Identifying and acknowledging the operational level is only half the battle. Training to fight at the operational level is the challenge.

Another critical question to be answered is: What training, if any, does the Army conduct at the operational level? An off-the-cuff answer would be none. Simulations are used extensively throughout the Army and in every theater, but how are those simulations used to train brigade and division staffs? Is the tendency to go back down to the tactical level with an exercise that should be pushing staffs and commanders to think in the other direction? The Battle Command Training Program (BCTP), as outlined in TRADOC Regulation 350-50-3, is “an attrition based training model to exercise battle command” (TRADOC Regulation 350-50-3 1999, chap. 3, para, 3-1.a.4.a.). The BCTP trains brigade, division, and corps staffs in fighting a major regional conflict (MRC) against an imaginary opposing force (OPFOR). By focusing on attrition, units are forced into fighting at the tactical level in order to facilitate close combat, resulting in enemy casualties that will enable the simulation to establish them as the victors. Simulations, such as the BCTP, are critical for training commanders and staffs to fight attrition battles at the tactical level, but more can be done to develop a non-attrition-based training for operational-level commanders.

Key Terms and Definitions

To discuss training at the various levels of war, the levels will be defined in accordance with existing doctrine. The strategic level of war is described as:

The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve these objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans. (JP 1-02 1997, 653)

Strategy is the realm of the politician, as well as the general, and encompasses the grander schemes of warfare. Strategy is fought from capitals on global maps with armies and all of the resources of the nation involved.

The operational level of war is described in Joint Publications (JP) 1-02 as:

The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations (AOs). Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure the logistic and administrative support of tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives. (JP 1-02 1997, 564)

The art of operational war fighting is not based on attrition but rather on forcing the enemy onto the horns of a dilemma as a result of superior maneuver and the application of friendly strengths against enemy weaknesses. Operational warfare seeks out enemy *centers of gravity*, or “those characteristics, capabilities, or sources of power from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight” (JP 3-0, 1995, GL-4). Operational warfare applies overwhelming combat power at *decisive points*, “A geographic place, specific key event, critical system, or function that allows

commanders to gain a marked advantage over an enemy and greatly influence the outcome of an action” (JP 3-0 1995, III-21). By hitting an enemy’s *decisive points* the operational warrior forces the enemy to *culminate*, the point at which a force no longer has the capability to continue its form of operations, offense or defense: (1) in the offense, the point at which continuing the attack is no longer possible and the force must consider reverting to a defensive posture or attempting an operational pause and (2) in the defense, the point at which counteroffensive action is no longer possible (JP 3-0 1995, III-22). All of this is achieved through the *synergy* of the friendly forces that act in concert to synchronize their aims and objectives (JP 3-0 1995, III-9). With few exceptions, the operational level begins with the army corps and includes army groups and higher.

The tactical level of war is described as:

The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives. (JP 1-02 1997, 677)

The tactical level of war is usually settled through attrition. One side achieves fire superiority over another and inflicts more casualties on the recipient than he is willing to accept. This results in the latter’s retreat or surrender.

By definition operational level implies more than one battle, possibly more than one campaign. Current staff training scenarios executed in simulations, such as the BCTP last five to seven days and involve, at most, one battle with several phases: defense, counterattack, stabilization. For units to train at the operational level they will have to fight campaigns that last longer than seven days. Operation Desert Storm

supposedly lasted for the 100 hours of the ground campaign. In actuality it lasted the six weeks of the air campaign, while a massive movement of operational scale was conducted simultaneously to posture forces for the ground attack. A training path that follows the development of a similar campaign is absent in today's training doctrine.

A possible alternative that will be addressed would be a commander's focused simulation along the lines of the BCTP model using actual or proposed war plans and the commanders who would execute them. By limiting the simulations to just commanders at the division and higher level, a model could be developed that would allow subjective analysis of operational level war fighting. This simulation would not replace the BCTP, but rather augment it and build on the lessons learned there. This simulation could also be used in courses, such as the Command and General Staff Course and the Army War College, to develop leaders who think at the operational level. A true training path from the tactical level up to and including the operational level could be realized and incorporated into the Army's training doctrine.

Assumptions

There are several assumptions made while researching this thesis:

The primary assumption is that formal operational-level training does not exist in the US Army. While operational-level instruction exists in the schoolhouse in a theoretical vein, the assumption is that units, staffs, and leaders do not participate in structured Army operational-level training in accordance with an established training doctrine.

Another key assumption is that the Army focuses its training at the tactical level. Army training doctrine outlines “tasks, conditions, and standards” for nearly everything required in the tactical fight but lacks any such guidance for the operational level of war.

It is assumed that training at the operational level is desirable and feasible for the US Army. Several past and present leaders of the US Army have publicly addressed the need for operational level training and in military publications and there has been an increase in the frequency and intensity of operational level instruction at the Command and General Staff College. Operational-level training simulations exist on the commercial market, and it is assumed that they could be modified or improved to facilitate Army training.

Limitations

This paper will not validate any existing or proposed simulations that may be recommended for use in operational level training. People who have used various simulations of the different levels of war will be interviewed, but no comprehensive surveys evaluating any particular simulations will be conducted.

Delimitations

Detailed cost analysis will not be examined. This paper is meant to serve as a base line for future discussion and development of ideas to increase the effectiveness of the US Army, not to replace any phase of the doctrine, training, leader development, organizations, material, and soldier systems (DTLMOS) process. Any changes to US Army doctrine subsequent to 11 September 2001 will not be addressed.

Significance of the Study

During times of peace the Army's primary responsibility is to prepare for war. This accomplishes many things, not the least of which is to ostensibly facilitate victory in the event a war must be waged. An army's credibility in the eyes of potential adversaries lies in its past successes, national will and economic strength, its equipment and the realism and extensiveness of its training. As the leading military power on the planet with increasing global responsibilities the leaders of today's Army must train realistically and extensively for warfare at the operational level. Tactical brilliance and strategic projection will not win wars unless they are meshed with operational-level expertise. The US Army has historically ignored training for this level of warfare, and wars have been lost because of it. The Army cannot afford to let that happen again. Soldiers' lives cannot be wasted due to ignorance or inexperience on the part of generals. The Army has the means, the will, the technology, and the know-how to be able to train every soldier at every level for his current and future duty assignment, and the Army must ensure that includes midlevel and senior leaders who will "fight" at the operational level.

Summary

The US Army is currently held to be one of, if not the finest Army in existence by anybody who knows anything about armies. Outstanding training at the tactical level has made this a fact. By addressing current omissions in operational-level training and implementing corrective action, the US Army can become that much better and continue to maintain its ascendancy in the global military arena.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research for this thesis has been broken down into three areas: operational art, existing US Army and Joint training doctrine, and simulations. Operational art is a subject that has evolved significantly in the US Army in the last twenty years. Origins of operational art are traced back to the Prussian Chief of Staff Moltke the elder, but a more modern theory of operational art was developed and instituted into doctrine by Marshal Tukhachevsky of the Soviet Army in the 1930s. US Army training doctrine made extraordinary progress in the 1970s following the debacle of American involvement in Vietnam. Since the US withdrawal from that war, training doctrine has been meticulously and extensively reviewed on a regular basis to ensure US forces are adequately trained for any eventuality. Simulation has been a growing area of development within the US military for training tactical units that would normally require large space and enormous resources to train. The benefits have been reduced costs and less controversy from rolling tanks and large formations of soldiers moving through the US and allied countries. All three of these areas are covered extensively in literature, especially in military periodicals. The civilian sector has been the largest contributor in the simulations department, and the proliferation of small, affordable and very capable computers has made simulations that much more attractive to the military.

Operational Art

Operational art has evolved in theory in recent years as a result of a reevaluation of the writings of Marshal Tukhachevsky of the Soviet Army. Marshal Tukhachevsky

envisioned *glubokii boi* or “deep battle” in Soviet doctrine in the 1936 regulation (PU-36) that was practiced until his death during Stalin’s purges of the late 1930s.

Tukhachevsky’s concept of operational art was designed for warfare in the western Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. American theory on operational art has evolved in the US Army, especially in the writing of the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, *Parameters*, the periodical of the War College, and in *Military Review*, the periodical of the US Army Command and General Staff College.

Several think tanks, independently and under contract from the Army, have undertaken research and produced opinions and theory on operational art. The trend among all of these publications is that operational art as depicted by Tukhachevsky can be applied to a theater of war, regardless of its location. The theory of *glubokii boi* is to plan a campaign that goes beyond the battlefield and into the depth of the enemy’s area of operations. This depth applies to both combatants, and theorists propose that operational art takes an attacker’s “rear areas” into account as much as it does the enemy’s.

The Evolution of Soviet Operational Art, 1927-1991, serves as a comprehensive study of the articles and studies written by the Soviets on operational art. The first two chapters are applicable to this study as they show the initial Soviet concepts of operational art and how they were developed during the interwar period and applied during World War II. G. Isserson’s article, “The Evolution of Operational Art,” in particular points out the constantly changing aspects of the operational level of war. Since it was written in 1932 amidst the technological changes in military equipment that had evolved from the Great War, it is particularly pertinent during today’s alleged Revolution in Military Affairs brought on by the information age.

The Framework of Operational Warfare claims to “contribute to the clearer understanding of the potentials and the dangers of war in the 1990s.” Published in 1991 by the then Chief of Historical Services at the US Army Center of Military History, Lieutenant Colonel Clayton R. Newell, this book attempts to approach war in a logical fashion. Newell uses the Army’s five-paragraph operations order as the framework for his window on warfare. He addresses a series of questions that countries should ask prior to engaging in war. These questions draw out the gaps inherent in warfare if strategy, operational art, and tactics are not linked.

The Operational Art of Warfare Across the Spectrum of Conflict is a compilation of essays by six US Army officers addressing the applications of operational art in the variety of conditions that can be experienced, the “Spectrum of Conflict.” This spectrum varies from counterinsurgency to full-scale conventional war. The authors address the challenges of the commander at the operational level as he strives to link national policy, that is, strategy, with victory in battle, that is, tactics. The annex includes “Analyses of Selected Sources of the Operational Art,” an annotated bibliography of books written about or significant to the study of operational art.

Peter J. Vlakancic provides the historical background for the modern origins of operational art in *Marshal Tukhachevsky and the “Deep Battle”: An Analysis of Operational Level Soviet Tank and Mechanized Doctrine, 1935-1945*. Vlakancic documents the conception and implementation of operational art within the Soviet Army, its “stagnation” after Tukhachevsky’s death and its revalidation during World War II. This short document, published by The Institute of Land Warfare, gives a good

foundation for understanding the concepts of operational art as they emerged in the first half of the twentieth century.

The remarks of the General Montgomery C. Meigs as the 2000 Kermit Roosevelt Lecturer in the United Kingdom are captured in *Operational Art in the New Century*. General Meigs reflects on the changing aspects of war at the operational level and how the US Army should adapt. He places significant emphasis on leader training at the operational level, starting with field grade officers. Joint training for field grade officers at the staff colleges:

provide[s] the first, best opportunity for embedding in our future leaders the understanding that while cohesion depends on the tribal traditions of regiments and services, success in campaigning depends fundamentally on fluency and competence in joint warfighting. With the greater reach of our systems, the blurring of the boundaries between what is strategic, operational, and tactical, and the increasing visibility of events in real time, the joint command, control, and integration of unit efforts is more important than ever. Army commanders exist to provide forces to or to fight the ground operations for joint force commanders. (Meigs 2000)

General Meigs continues by emphasizing the importance of operational training similar to the tactical training offered by the Combined Training Centers (CTCs), “We must have similarly rigorous crucibles for joint and combined headquarters” (Meigs 2000).

US Army and Joint Training Doctrine

US Army training doctrine is clearly defined through a series of publications that direct training operations and their implementation from the corps down to the individual level. Field Manual 25-100, *Training the Force*, and its companion, FM 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*, serve as the foundation for leaders to plan for and resource training. In addition to these manuals Army leaders are provided with specific manuals for operations at different levels, in different environments and for different missions.

Manuals vary in detail from the specifics of operating a particular weapon to the concepts of employing large formations, such as brigades, divisions, and corps. Most manuals show links and references to complimentary documents that support the specific area they cover. Mission training plans bring individual training together into collective training for squad and higher units. Army regulations address other training not covered in FMs, such as safety, live fire training, and simulations.

The Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations, FM 100-7, provides extensive background for how the Army will plan and conduct operations under the control of the war-fighting commanders in chief. This explains the command and control relationships within the theater and breaks down the responsibilities of the Army commanders as they relate to the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. This document is the Army component commander's primer for planning and executing campaigns. What FM 100-7 lacks is an accompanying mission-training plan for outlining and breaking down the tasks that it describes.

The Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) produces documents in the form of CJCS manuals, CJCS instructions (CJCSI) and joint publications (JPs). One such document, CJCSM 3500.03, *Joint Training Manual for the Armed Forces of the United States*, provides an "integrated, requirements-based methodology for aligning training programs with assigned missions consistent with command priorities and available resources." This methodology serves as a foundation for the services training doctrine. The CJCS has also produced CJCSI 3500.01B, *Joint Training Policy for the Armed Forces of the United States*. These instructions outline everything from the tenets of joint training to multinational joint training considerations.

CJCSM 3500.04B, *Universal Joint Task List*, takes the tasks inherent in joint operations and breaks them down within the levels of war. With the *National Security Strategy*, *National Military Strategy*, and the joint documents produced by the CJCS, US Army roles and tasks in future operations, or missions, which will drive the alignment of training programs will be clearly defined. The Operational Plans and Interoperability Directorate of the CJCS has also produced a briefing, *Operational Art: Overview of Operational Art*, that “focuses on employing operational art, in concert with strategic guidance and direction received from superior leaders, in developing campaigns and operations.”

The CJCS has also published JP 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, which:

sets forth doctrine, principles, and policy to govern the joint activities and performance of the Armed Forces of the United States. It designates the authorized command relationships and authority military commanders can use; provides doctrine, principles, and policy for the exercise of that authority; provides doctrine, principles, and policy for organizing joint forces; and prescribes policy for selected joint activities. (JP 0-2 1995, i)

JP 0-2 is helpful in clarifying the relationships within the joint community, especially as they pertain to the regional commanders in chief (CINCs) and their subordinate service component commanders (SCCs). JP 0-2 ties in closely with FM 100-7 in describing the planning and execution of joint operations during the conduct of a campaign.

Writings on simulations take two forms. The first is focused on commercial-based simulations that have been applied to the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. While these simulations are complex programs that address several aspects of

military decision making and have been used in training, these are not the simulations that the US Army has historically relied on for training. Larger, more complex simulations within the Army Family of Simulations (FAMSIM) program, such as JANUS, SPECTRUM, Brigade and Battalion Staffs (BBS), Corps Battle Simulation (CBS), Tactical Simulation (TACSIM), and Combat Service Support Training Simulation System (CSSTSS), have been used for several years “for training unit commanders, battle staffs, CPs and HQ in CPXs, as well as leader development training simulations” (TRADOC 350-5-3 1999, 6-2). Writings on these simulations, as well as writings that address the future of these simulations, will be the focus of the research.

In 1999 the Commandant of the US Army War College, Major General Robert H. Scales, published *Future Warfare*. This book looks at the US Army as it exists today and how it is proposed to look out to 2025, based on current and expected threats. Of particular importance to this paper is the segment on the 1997 Leavenworth Games. These “games” were a series of simulations that were used to derive after-action reviews (AARs) for modeling the “Army After Next.” While General Scales’ book does not focus on simulations, it provides insight to the degree with which the Army has become reliant on simulations for training and modeling.

Virtual Combat, A Guide to Distributed Interactive Simulation explains the intricacies of modern simulations used by the Department of Defense. Distributed Interactive Simulation (DIS) specifically addresses those simulations used at the tactical level, such as flight simulators, tank gunnery simulators, and the multiple weapon systems integrated in the SIMNET. This book’s greatest contribution to this study is the background it gives on the evolution of the simulations within the military and the many

national level programs that are currently working on expanding the roles of all types of simulations for planning and training.

The RAND Corporation published *Implementing the Battle Command Training Program* for the US Army. Its purpose was to present

an examination of the BCTP based on (1) the common understanding between the BCTP and its clients as to its purposes, methods, and evaluation criteria and (2) the data collection and analysis strategies required of the BCTP to provide feedback to client units and to higher-echelon doctrinal and readiness agencies. Recommendations are made to increase the BCTP's capability to improve Army training, both in terms of short-term issues of readiness of individual divisions and long-term issues of higher-echelon command and control. (Kahan 1997, iii)

This report addresses many of the strengths and weaknesses of the Army's premiere simulation for brigade and higher commanders and staffs.

The document governing the conduct of the Army's BCTP is TRADOC Regulation 350-50-3, *Battle Command Training Program*. This regulation outlines the mission, capabilities, responsibilities, and operating procedures for the BCTP. Chapter six, "Simulations, Models and Army Battle Command Systems," describes the collective level simulations used by the Army and how they support Army training. This document serves as an outline for any future simulation development.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This paper is a study of how the US Army can better train to fight at the operational level of war. The basis for this requirement is found in William R. Abb's monograph, "Redefining Division and Corps Competencies: Are Divisions and Corps Training to Fight Joint." Abb's contention is that divisions and corps are not trained to fight joint. While the arguments set forth in this paper are based on the assumption that Abb is correct and that this shortcoming can be corrected it will not be constrained to division and corps staff training. This paper is a look at the Army's training doctrine and how it is or is not applied to operational-level training.

Though not preferable, the strategic and tactical levels of war can be fought exclusively by one service. This paper contends that where the operational level of war is present, it is the level of war that must be fought joint. Working from that assumption and based on Abb's assertion that corps and divisions are not trained to fight joint, this paper will examine the focus of the Army's training doctrine. This examination will determine where this doctrine is deficient in training at the operational level of war and make suggestions and recommendations for improving it or implementing new training.

For comment on training at the operational level, first an understanding of how the operational level of war relates to the strategic and tactical levels must be provided. Each level will be examined briefly, focusing on the interaction of the three and in particular the relationship of the operational level as the bridge between the other two. A short explanation of the evolution of the operational level will provide background and a

foundation for subsequent discussion. Strategy and tactics will be described, but it is assumed that both the terms and the concepts are familiar.

This paper will address the strategic context that drives national strategy, campaign or operational planning, and eventually tactical execution. This will lay the foundation for determining how Army training doctrine has been developed in the past, with respect to operational missions, and how it may be developed in the future. Since all training should be focused on operational requirements, this will also allow the paper to address how requirements may limit or inhibit one or more training tasks. This will also remind the reader of the constant operational demands of the Army that often distract it from addressing doctrinal shortcomings due to existing operations that dominate professional dialogue.

Due to the lack of quantifiable measures for evaluating staff training a subjective approach, that is, an analysis and dialogue derived from existing doctrinal documents and recent trends in training will be applied. Current and limited draft doctrine will be examined, as will professional publications, official and privately commissioned studies. The original thesis question will lead to subsequent queries. If current training doctrine does not meet the needs of training at the operational level, what level does it focus on? How does the Army implement its current training doctrine? Does this training follow an established training path with progressive tasks that build individual training up to collective training? Should this training be altered or improved? What tasks are missing from the current training path? How does the Army currently train its leaders at each level?

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, to train is, “to make proficient with specialized instruction and practice.” Army staff training attempts to make staffs “proficient” in specific tasks and skills appropriate for the missions they will perform. Army training doctrine will be examined, with emphasis on the process of instruction and practice. The training of staffs and staff officers will receive particular attention.

In the last twenty years the Army has placed an ever-increasing emphasis on simulation training. These simulations have slowly replaced the massive, expensive exercises of the past, such as Reforger and Team Spirit. While these exercises may or may have not been designed as operational-level training, they came the closest to simulating the maneuver of large formations in wartime that the US Army has ever seen. Those exercises and their potentially operational-level training value are a thing of the past and are not likely to return. Where large-scale exercises have decreased in size, the trend in simulations has been in the other direction, from tactical to potentially operational. What will receive critical attention is the attrition mind-set these simulations have created in Army leaders. This paper will address how simulations may be incorporated into operational-level training to the same degree that they currently are in tactical-level training while emphasizing the importance of non-attrition-based models.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

The Current Operating Environment

Historically, especially in the last century, the US Army has operated from relatively secure forward logistical bases. The regular availability of these bases has created a mind-set within the Army that allowed it to focus on the tactical fight. If bases and lines of communication (LOCs) are already established and secure, they allow the commander to focus his efforts on other things, building up his logistical footprint to support tactical operations, close, land-based air support.

In the current operating environment the opposite trend is becoming the norm. The Army no longer knows where it will fight. It can no longer be assured of secure LOCs. Of particular importance to today's Army are aerial ports and seaports of debarkation. The proliferation of mobile theater ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction places these critical nodes at a greater risk than ever before. "The proliferation of WMD and long-range delivery systems will enable adversaries to threaten US forces at greater ranges with increased lethality and precision" (FM 3-0 2001, 1-8). If these ports are compromised or denied prior to the closure of a US force then the tactical fight will never occur. These nodes have become friendly centers of gravity and the thinking, adaptive enemies who currently seek to defeat the US will not ignore this fact.

In the *Concept for the Objective Force Concept Summary* the Army raises the bar for the Objective Force by declaring that it will "see first, understand first, act first and finish decisively at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of operation" (US Army

2001, ii). This declaration affirms the Army's ability to operate in an environment despite the efforts of the enemy to

employ anti-access strategies comprising several integrated lines of action (from diplomacy to information operations to direct and indirect military actions) aimed at preventing or limiting U.S. impact on regional crises. Simultaneously, they seek to physically thwart U.S. intervention through strikes against forward operating bases, entry points, command and control nodes, and the forces themselves extending all the way back to the CONUS base. Army wargaming repeatedly demonstrates that the longer an enemy can delay effective U.S. response, the greater his chances for success. Anti-access capabilities could include theater ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, long-range rockets and artillery, weapons of mass destruction and other unconventional means, and information operations. (US Army 2001, 2)

Current training exercises do not address the importance of these vital nodes. The typical division or corps war fighter begins after the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) has taken place. By wishing away the enemy threat at what is potentially the most vulnerable point the exercise fails to follow one of the principles of training outlined in FM 25-100, "train as you fight" (FM 25-100 1988, 1-3). By not adhering to this principle such exercises automatically assume the enemy has surrendered the initiative and allowed friendly forces to posture the tactical forces on the battlefield that will guarantee his defeat. This approach is making the mistake of planning to "fight the last war," whereas, in fact, all enemies will not be as permissive as Saddam Hussein.

The existing Army training doctrine's principle of "using appropriate doctrine" is also ignored at higher echelons. Again this is especially true with respect to the BCTP program. The current Field Manual 3-0, *Army Operations*, describes today's enemies in no uncertain terms.

Adversaries will develop warfighting doctrine that takes perceived US strengths and vulnerabilities into account. They will try to prevent projection of US forces and control the nature and the tempo of US actions through asymmetric operations and adaptive forces. They will try to counter US air operations and neutralize US technological advantages, such as precision strike capabilities. Adversaries will adapt to more nonlinear, simultaneous operations conducted throughout the AO. They will use conventional and unconventional means to destroy US national will and the capability to wage war. (FM 3-0 2001, 1-8, 1-9)

Leaders making those critical decisions that will make the difference between victory and defeat must be trained to think and operate in this environment. Determining if the Army's current training doctrine achieves this goal is this paper's next focus.

FM 25-100, Training the Force

Field Manual (FM) 25-100, *Training the Force*, "is the Army's standardized training doctrine applicable throughout the force. . . . The principal focus is on Active and Reserve battalion equivalent and higher level commanders, their command sergeants major, and staffs" (FM 25-100 1988, ii). FM 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*, is the counterpart to FM 25-100 and "applies this doctrine and assists leaders in the development and execution of training programs. It provides "tactical 'how to' guidelines for officers and NCOs, including techniques and procedures for planning, executing, and assessing training" (FM 25-101 1990, forward) While FM 25-101 is focused on battalions and lower, the thought process that goes into that training is what has driven the army's training doctrine at higher levels, which is why it will be so important for this paper to analyze. The tactical level of war is "battle focused," which answers one of this paper's questions as to where the US Army is focused in its training. At the same time, the procedures, captured in FM 25-101, which have produced such a

tactically proficient force, are worthy of investigation for potential application at the operational or “campaign focused” level.

Both of these manuals have five chapters, similarly named, that outline how the army should train from conception through assessment. This paper will look at these manuals in order to discern at which level they are focused. This paper will also determine the underlying philosophy of these documents that has enabled them to survive unchanged for so many years and produce such a tactically proficient army. These determinations will allow this paper to extrapolate the need for operational training and, if necessary, where it should fit into the equation.

Chapter one, *Training Overview*, starts off with “Training Challenges,” which outlines the importance of training and how in the nations past well-trained units have made the difference between victory and defeat. This chapter’s introduction also states three things that training must do:

1. Practice the techniques and procedures of integrated command and control
2. Enable units to apply joint and combined doctrine and tactics
3. Exercise all support systems required to sustain combat operations

Chapter one goes on to pay particular attention to the nine “Principles of Training:”

- Train as Combined Arms and Services Team
- Train as You Fight
- Use Appropriate Doctrine
- Use Performance-Oriented Training
- Train to Challenge
- Train to Sustain Proficiency
- Train Using Multiechelon Techniques
- Train to Maintain
- Make Commanders the Primary Trainers (FM 25-100 1988, 1-3 – 1-5)

The *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* defines principles as, “A comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption” (1996). The “Principles of Training” are not laws that must be followed by a leader, but rather truths learned through practical experience that, if followed, will potentially enhance training. Leaders are the determiners of which principles are more appropriate to a given unit or situation, but the premise is that these principles, if followed, will provide effective training.

Chapter one closes with the responsibilities of leaders in training their units and in what it calls “battle focus.” This paper will not focus on the leaders’ tasks but will look closely at the “battle focus” for what it gives the mission and how it drives the training path. “Battle focus is a concept used to derive peacetime training requirements from wartime missions” (FM 25-101 1990, 1-10). “Battle focus” ensures that all training, including individual, leader, and collective, is geared towards supporting the unit’s wartime missions. This focus enables leaders to easily and effectively manage those tasks that should and should not be trained. It “focuses” the unit’s attention to the specific tasks it will need to be proficient during battle. This battle focus drives the training management cycle or training path for the unit.

Chapter two, “Mission Essential Task List (METL) Development,” addresses the process for developing a unit’s METL. War plans and external directives are analyzed by the commander, who then derives his unit’s METL. While this may seem simple it must be remembered that there is a veritable plethora of tasks that could loosely be tied to a war plan. The commander’s challenge is to apply the fundamentals for developing a METL to ensure his METL tasks are truly “mission essential.” These fundamentals range from application to the entire organization to integration of the seven battlefield operating

systems (maneuver, fire support, command and control, intelligence, mobility and survivability, combat service support and air defense.) From this METL the commander establishes his training objectives. These objectives cover the conditions and standards for each of his mission essential tasks. The commander can use existing Army mission training plans (MTPs), soldiers' manuals, and other documents to arrive at the standards he wants.

An explanation of battle tasks or those tasks that "will determine the success of the next higher organization's mission essential task" conclude the chapter on METL development (FM 25-100 1988, 2-7). By identifying and emphasizing the importance of these tasks the commander can focus on the integration of the BOS, seek prioritization of resources from higher headquarters, and stress what needs particular attention during evaluations (FM 25-100 1988, 2-7).

The longest chapter in FM 25-100 is chapter three, "Planning." "Planning is an extension of the battle focus concept that links organizational METL with the subsequent execution and evaluation of training" (FM 25-100 1988, 3-1). Planned training is viewed as the best training. Therefore, the document stresses the importance of detailed and centralized planning.

The planning process starts with the METL, inputs the commander's assessment of training, and issues the commander's guidance (vision, goals, priorities) for training, which drives the development of the training plan. Training plans come in three types: long range, short range, and near term. One of the reasons for centralized training planning is the time factor required for commanders at each level to produce their

guidance early enough for subordinates to start the process of resourcing the directed training.

Training plans start at the Major Army Command (MACOM) level and trickle down to battalions. Each echelon takes a portion of the time addressed, usually one-quarter of the year, and designates which portion of the time will be focused on its particular training events. As the plan flows down the chain of command, subordinates ensure they support their higher commander's training plan, in accordance with his training guidance, and input their training events. This backwards-planning process, when applied under ideal circumstances, should allow for each level to apply the principles of training to its training plan, supporting its higher commander's plan and culminating in a proficient unit. Most plans start at the lowest end with individual-level training and follow a training plan or path, that culminates in one or a series of collective (multileveled) training events, all focused on the METL.

While long-range planning is a rather broad stroke and addresses major events and larger training objectives, subsequent to the publication of the long-range plan, units develop their short-range plans. The short-range plans are more detailed in scope and allow subordinates to specify resources needed and tasks to be trained. Near-term planning builds on this specificity and includes the final coordination necessary to conduct the actual events. All of the plans are captured and disseminated through training calendars, schedules, and training guidance and are monitored during training meetings.

Execution is covered in chapter 4 and addresses the common requirements for executing good training: adequate preparation, effective presentation, and practice

(FM25-100 1988). Preparation begins with the planning phase but also includes all of the coordinations, trainer training, and preinspections that must occur prior to a training event. “Properly presented and practiced training is accurate, well structured, efficient, realistic, safe, and effective” (FM 25-100 1988, 4-2). Chapter 4 also breaks down areas within a unit that need attention for effective execution, such as battle rosters to track training, NCO responsibilities as a unit’s primary individual level trainer, use of Training and Evaluation Outlines (T&EOs), staff training, and leader training.

FM 25-100 concludes with chapter five, “Assessment.” Assessment includes the evaluation of training through thorough and focused after-action reviews (AARs) conducted by evaluators (internal or external) and unit leaders. This assessment should occur at informal and formal levels and should be viewed as a means of increasing a unit’s proficiency and focusing its training plan, not as a critique. Written assessments, maintained on file, allow units to tailor future training to address areas that need improvement. AARs are critical in providing the commander training feedback on both the proficiency of the unit and the effectiveness of the training.

FM 25-100’s endurance as the foundation for the Army’s training doctrine for over fourteen years is testimony to its soundness. This enduring quality is mirrored in its companion document FM 25-101. While FM 25-100 focuses on a training philosophy for “the force,” FM 25-101 is written for “battalion and company soldiers, leaders, and units” (1990, cover). Although FM 25-100 is written as an overall concept for how the Army should train, it begs for an accompaniment along the lines of FM 25-101 above the battalion level. Without a companion document for FM 25-100 focused on brigade and higher units, Army leaders have taken what was written in FM 25-100 and FM 25-101

and independently modeled training for these units along the same lines. This again testifies to the applicability and relevance of what these two documents say. At the brigade and higher levels ingenuity in training should not have to serve as a substitute for training doctrine. In other words, just because the Army has survived without a document outlining operational level training does not mean the need for it does not exist.

The challenge is to apply the fundamentals of effective training at the tactical level and apply them to the operational level. When Marshal Tukhachevsky first wrote of *gluboky boi*, laying the groundwork for American operational theory, he envisioned it on the plains of Eastern Europe. As deep battle evolved into the US Army's AirLand Battle it maintained many of the same aspects. This traditional view of the operational level of war has evolved to include the campaigns that are not necessarily constrained to a continental land battle. For today's expeditionary Army, the operational level includes all those aspects of the operation that posture the force into a theater and set the conditions for subsequent battles. For an expeditionary force, the operational level truly bridges the gap between strategic and tactical by getting the force to the area deemed strategically important and posturing it to win tactically in order to achieve the strategic end state.

For the US Army the operational phase starts with planning for the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of forces that have been strategically lifted, by air or sea, to the theater of operations. In today's environment the operational level would include ports of embarkation and debarkation. If the movement and posturing of forces into the theater cannot occur, a forced entry must take place to enable the tactical

fight to develop. It is the decisive tactical fight, which is the end state of a properly planned campaign that the operational level strives for.

In an interview, retired General Cavazos stated that operational-level training is more of a study than an actual training event. He based this on the increased impact of political and strategic considerations at the operational level. General Cavazos' view was that operational art was trained through the experiences of an officer, as he progressed through his career. Division and corps commanders, as well as their chiefs of staff, were the primary trainers during any staff-level exercise or operation. General Cavazos went on to say that logistical considerations were a key component of operational art and that was not something that could be easily trained but came readily through experience (2001, 1).

The Significance of FM 100-7

The National Military Strategy (NMS) and *National Security Strategy (NSS)* provide the service components and five regional commanders in chief (CINCs) the guidance for structuring and training their respective forces.

The CINC translates the national-level strategic directives into a theater strategy. This strategy is the basis for developing a campaign plan and leads to operations plans for execution. Joint or multinational forces implement these plans in theater to achieve theater strategic objectives that, in turn, achieve national objectives (FM 100-7 1995, 2-4). According to FM 100-7, within a regional CINC's staff, the Army service component commander performs three basic tasks:

- Establishes and maintains linkages to joint, multinational, interagency, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and private voluntary organizations (PVOs).

- Provides logistical support to ARFOR and, when directed, to other services, allies, or multinational forces.
- Conducts major land operations to support the campaign or subordinate campaigns when assigned by the CINC as an operational-level commander to accomplish the joint commander's theater strategic and operational objectives. (1995, p. iv)

This Army service component commander (ASCC) operates on the cusp of the strategic level (the first bullet) deeply within the operational level (the second bullet) and on the fringes of the tactical level (the third bullet). The CINC, on the other hand,

is a strategic-level commander of a unified command, who provides strategic direction and operational focus to his subordinate commands. CINCs serve as the vital link between national military strategy and theater strategy. They provide the strategic and operational direction required for major unified and joint land, air, and maritime operations. The CINC is not simply a planner and allocator of resources; he has a broad range of responsibilities established by public law and described in joint publications. (FM 100-7, 1995, 2-10)

FM 100-7 further delineates the ASCC's responsibilities.

The ASCC supports the theater combatant CINC by conducting Army operations to support or attain the CINC's established objectives. The Army contributes forces to perform combat, logistics, and support activities in theater. The Army organizes, trains, and equips these land forces to accomplish all assigned missions. (FM 100-7, 1995, 2-22)

The manual also goes on to establish senior leader responsibilities within the Department of the Army.

Senior army leaders, using an operational-level perspective, task-organize the Army to maximize its capabilities in the theater. The Army's theater organization provides the means to execute the designs of operational art while facilitating joint operations. (FM 100-7, 1995, 2-22)

Once forces are deployed into a theater,

The Army may act as a service component, functional component, subunified command, or JTF subordinate to the JFC during the conduct of operational-level activities. The ASCC, or ARFOR commander, acting in one or more of these roles at the operational level, plans and conducts subordinate campaigns, major operations, and operations to attain theater strategic and/or

operational objectives to support the joint force mission. . . . The Army operational-level commander may translate these conditions into a single military objective or phased military objectives expressed in major operations that support joint campaigns. (FM 100-7, 1995, 3-5)

What FM 100-7 establishes is a clearly defined role for the Army at the strategic and operational levels in order to allow it to defeat the enemy at the tactical level. What FM 100-7 lacks is a mission-training plan (MTP) specifying the tasks at each of these levels that must be accomplished in order to achieve the desired strategic and operational end state.

Leadership Training

Based on the understanding that operational art is the conduct of campaigns and operations within a theater, operational level training should follow the same outline. Campaigns are generally not service specific, even “air campaigns” tend to include USAF and USN aircraft, which implies that training to conduct campaigns is a joint undertaking. That being said, what responsibilities for training within this joint environment does the Army have? This paper would contend that the first priority and probably the easiest approach to training for operational art is comprehensive leader training. This training should begin at officers’ basic courses and evolve, as officers progress through their careers, receiving reinforcing training at the career courses, Combined Arms Services Staff School, Command and General Staff College, and the US Army War College.

According to FM 3-0, leadership is the most important element of combat power (FM 3-0, 2001, 4-7). If the Army adheres to this belief then the training path for operational art should start with leaders. It would seem obvious that leaders should be

the first and most likely to benefit from operational-level training since it is leaders who are the primary planners and decision makers at the operational level. This does not mean that tactical leaders should be exempt from operational-level training, since on today's battlefield it is accepted and expected that tactical leaders will make decisions that have operational and even strategic significance. The white paper for the Objective Force even goes so far as to say that the Army should expect and prepare junior leaders to take on even greater degrees of responsibility for this very reason. In order to address this acceptance of the importance of leadership this paper will observe the current training path for Army leaders.

The branch specific officers basic courses are initial entry courses, designed to build on the individual and leadership skills developed in an officer's precommissioning training. Individual and leadership skills are rightfully focused on the tactical level, since the vast majority of new lieutenants will initially serve at the tactical level.

Branch advanced or career courses continue to focus on tactical training. Captains are taught the skills they will need as battalion and brigade staff officers, as well as those needed for company command. Less attention is given to individual training and more to staff planning and the orders process. Graduates of these courses are well prepared for service in battalions and brigades and as company commanders. Unfortunately, as captains, not all officers serve at the company, battalion, or brigade level immediately after their career courses. A great many serve on division or higher staffs. This is where the Army's institutional leadership training begins to falter in providing leaders the appropriate skills they will need to serve on these higher staffs that operate at the operational level.

Once officers have served on a variety of staffs and commanded at the company level, their career progression will take them to the Command and General Staff College. This is the first exposure to operational- and strategic-level training that an officer will get from within the Army's current career development training path. Although officers have been serving on division, corps, and even joint staffs prior to this, they have not been given any Army-structured training to prepare them for those duties. By this time they are already at least half way through the average twenty-year career, and all of their institutional training to date has been at the tactical level.

This typical career path is lacking from a leadership development perspective because of its omission of operational-level training until a leader is potentially on the downhill side of a twenty-year career. Officers will be presented with operational-level decisions, as soon as they begin to serve in units, and in the case of the Objective Force the Army is saying that this trend will increase instead of decrease by design. What is needed is a path that augments the current focus on tactical training to increase in junior leaders an understanding of the operational level and prepare them to be field grade leaders who are educated and conversant in the operational art and confident and competent to make critical plans and decisions at that level. With an increase in the decentralization of the battlefield as a result of weapons and technological developments, the Army must train leaders to truly think at two and possibly three levels up, not just know the mission two or three levels up.

Operational-Level Training

What training does the Army conduct at the operational level? The Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) has a Mission Essential Task List (METL) task to

“provide training assistance to Army, corps, and division HQ designated as a JFLCC/ARFOR or Commander, Joint Task Force (CJTF)” (TRADOC Reg. 350-50-3 1999, 1-6). In reality Team D has found itself training ARFOR headquarters exclusively (Beattie 2001, 1). A monograph on the training of Army division and corps staffs’ employment as ARFOR, JFLCC, or JTFs found,

both Army and joint doctrine are moving in the right direction but have a tremendous amount of work ahead. Work is needed to establish a collection of authoritative doctrine flexible in its wartime MTW focus, sufficiently detailed in its guidance for peacetime joint training and without shifting responsibility from the service components, doctrine that provides forces adequately trained and immediately responsive to the combatant commanders. (Abb 1999, 44)

Abb goes on to address the shortcomings of Army doctrine with relation to prioritization of those tasks units will most likely find themselves deployed to carry out. In particular for division and corps headquarters this would be as Army Forces Command (ARFOR), the commander of all Army forces under the CINC; Joint Forces Land Component Command (JFLCC), the commander of all land component forces under the CINC, be they Army or Marine; or a Joint Task Force (JTF) subordinate headquarters established by the CINC for a specific mission or operation. These are all echelons that operate at both the tactical and operational level. While theoretically BCTP’s Team D would address this discrepancy, the truth is somewhat different. Lieutenant Colonel Beattie of BCTP Team D explained that the training they conduct is usually at the Army level, even though they can go down to the division level. Lieutenant Colonel Beattie further explained that the training was primarily “discovery learning” and that they spend most of their time training headquarters by filling in the knowledge gap that is apparent from officers’ understandings of operational level versus the tactical level (Beattie 2001,

1). Several explanations for this are possible. Lack of command emphasis, unit prioritization based on current OPTEMPO that omits this level of training, lack of fundamental operational-level training focused at the individual level, or, as retired General Lindsay said, “go with what you know” (Lindsay 2001, 1). In either case the solution is available, it just is not being utilized.

In answer to General Lindsay’s claim that, due to its joint nature, operational-level training should be planned, resourced, and conducted by JFCOM, joint doctrine emphasizes the responsibilities of the service component commands “to provide forces organized, trained, and equipped to perform a role--to be employed by the combatant commander in the accomplishment of a mission” (JP 0-2 1995, I-6). Abb also points out that,

USFJCOM and current joint doctrine, handbooks and guides will continue to offer valuable direction for JTF training once the crisis action planning begins. The doctrine is operational in nature and USJFCOM remains reluctant to challenge service component responsibilities under Title 10 or provide authoritative direction for peacetime training outside CinC directed joint exercise programs. (1999, 45)

Abb goes on to conclude that the Army’s current training doctrine is “sound, it simply lacks adequate balance.” (Abb 1999, 46)

All of this leads to the conclusion that a more current Army training doctrine needs both an increased emphasis on operational training, and an attempt to better coordinate and synchronize with joint training doctrine as promulgated by the JFCOM. While BCTP Team D is tasked with a piece of this mission, only senior Army leadership can ensure that this synchronization takes place.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has determined that the Army's training doctrine is sound at the tactical level and has been proven over the past 2 1/2 decades. However, the Army has applied this doctrine to the operational level with mixed results in the BCTP program under the auspices of Team D. Another possible approach for training at the operational level that would impact the largest population with the smallest possible cost in money and organizational turbulence would be to incorporate it into the officer educational system. This approach would ensure repeated exposure for every officer in the Army at each progressive level of schooling. The tools to implement this are already in place and could be adapted with minimal time, effort, and expense.

As an officer progresses today he goes from individual to tactical training until he reaches the Command and General Staff Course (CGSC). At CGSC he receives a minimum exposure to operational-level training in the Directorate of Joint and Multinational Operations course C500, Operational Warfighting. This course exposes officers to the aspects of the operational level of war and culminates in two exercises that develop campaign plans for a major regional conflict (MRC) and a peacekeeping operation (PKO).

To complement the operational-level training encompassed in C500, CGSC continues an officer's tactical training at the appropriate field grade level. Completely separate from the operational-level course is the Center for Army Tactics course C300, Fundamentals of Warfighting. The C300 course covers the tactical level of war and culminates in two exercises, both MRCs, fought at the brigade and division level.

Separately these courses follow the army's training doctrine of moving from individual to collective-level training, matching the training to the appropriate skill sets of the individual being trained. What is missing is the synthesis or transition between the operational and tactical levels. The C500 course never validates its campaign plans at the tactical level. The C300 course has already assumed that the operational-level fight has been won and that the tactical fight will be unhindered by operational-level concerns. This mistake is repeated in the Command and General Staff College's capstone exercise, Prairie Warrior, which is a simulation incorporating an MRC in a fictitious country that involves a US corps headquarters, US division and its organic and attached brigades, as well as joint units. While noble in its goals, Prairie Warrior falls into the same trap as C300 and C500. It fails to tie the operational and tactical levels together. The fight begins with the US forces already on the ground. A huge piece of the operational fight is assumed to have been fought and won. No issues of port denial are addressed. The magnitude of the logistical effort to transport a US corps half way across the globe and the ensuing reception staging onward movement and integration is ignored. As General Cavazos stated with regard to training for the operational level of war, "It's all about the logistics" (Cavazos 2001, 1).

What could and should be done to address these discrepancies is to integrate C300, C500, and Prairie Warrior, or whatever the capstone exercise is to be called, into a training path that mirrors a unit's war planning, alert, deployment, RSOI, and subsequent fight in an MRC. The Army's training doctrine follows that exact principle, individual to collective, all geared towards the same battle tasks, focused on the unit's METL, derived from the unit's wartime mission. Additionally, this technique should incorporate real-

world threats in real theaters, operating under the constraints and limitations under which the real CINCs are operating.

A proposed year in the life of a CGSC student, integrating the above considerations, would look like this. First semester would be core courses in leadership, resource management, history, and assorted electives. Additionally, the class would receive a series of briefings on the theater that would be used for the C500, C300, and Prairie Warrior exercises. This would provide the foundation for the planning to take place in subsequent classes. The theater briefings would be unclassified but current and not imaginary. The “World Class Opposing Force” or “Current Operating Environment” cell that manages the opposing forces in simulations would model their threats to fit the theater addressed. Branch specific briefings would orient officers to the issues where their expertise would be required. The end state of these briefings, call it C900, would be to produce theater subject matter experts.

Since the Army is now a “capabilities-based force” and no longer threat based, in the long term this course would rotate through the potential theaters throughout the world, ensuring a constant evaluation of every potential region for employment and the capabilities needed within those regions. An added benefit to this approach would be to seed the army with a wealth of knowledge on theaters that are potential areas of conflict. Within four years every theater could be addressed. By following a constant rotation the field grade officers of the Army who attend CGSC would become a wealth of knowledge, beneficial to any level staff, on the requirements of fighting in any theater on the planet.

To return to the school year, the second semester would include assorted electives and C500, Operational Warfighting. The campaign plan to be developed in C500 would

take place in the theater that the class is studying. This would facilitate a much more detailed mission analysis and allow for a much more detailed campaign plan. The fact that a real theater with the real assets available would be used would facilitate the education of the officers as to what to expect if and when they are deployed into that theater. To truly study the operational level of war and give maximum exposure to the factors and issues that influence the operational-level commander, each section would be broken down to cover a regional CINC's staff. By incorporating a truly joint staff into the course students will better understand the challenges presented at the operational level. The staff would also benefit from knowing that whatever plan they come up with is the one they will fight at the tactical level during C300.

The campaign plan developed should be war-gamed, not in an attrition-based simulation, but in the true sense of the war game, as conducted by BCTP's Team D, through the interaction and mentorship of the instructors and the students. Students would learn and understand the impact operational-level decisions have on the tactical fight. The end state for C500 would be a campaign plan that can be given to a corps or division for execution.

The third semester would include assorted electives and C300, Fundamentals of Warfighting. Depending on students' follow-on assignments and the needs of the course, sections could be established as corps and or division cells or division and or brigade cells. Since corps and divisions have and will continue to serve as a JFLCC, this follows current doctrine and forces students to adapt to and address the problems associated with this level. This course would pick up where C500 left off, with the corps or division receiving the campaign plan developed in C500. To utilize all of the potential subject

matter experts within a section and to train on the skills and tasks required of staff officers, such as coordinating with adjacent and higher units, the section should be incorporated into a corps or division staff and subordinate division or brigade staffs. Since the campaign plan has been developed and issued and every member of the staff has become an SME on the theater, parallel planning can begin as soon as the division staff is formed.

The division and brigades can then develop a plan through the military decision-making process (MDMP) and fight that plan in a BCTP simulation. The end state for this course would be students who have served on corps, division, or brigade staffs and planned and executed an operation against an existing threat on a potential battlefield in the “current operating environment.”

The end state for CGSC would be joint and operationally minded field grade officers whose tactical knowledge and expertise would be enhanced by a greater understanding of the operational level of war. Graduates would also be thoroughly knowledgeable in a potential theater of employment.

Campaign Command Training Program

An example of a potential Army training program to address the need to train at the operational level could be to use the model of the BCTP to form a Campaign Command Training Program (CCTP). This program could be focused on general officers, in particular, the corps and higher leaders. The CCTP could be the capstone exercise for colonels at the War College. It could be incorporated into the curriculum at the Command and General Staff College, similar to the Prairie Warrior BCTP program. Campaigns for the CCTP need to follow current events and reflect potential future

operations. The intent would be to train leaders how to think “operationally,” but to also educate them on the real environments and conditions they will be forced to work in.

The CCTP campaign could follow the Command and General Staff College’s Department of Joint Military Operations Campaign development model from the Command and General Staff College’s C500 course to validate existing operations plans (OPLANs). Once the campaign plan has been validated, the participants would execute the plan in simulation. The focus of the simulation would not be on the tactical aspects of the fight, but in “shaping” the battlefield for the “fighters.” “Shaping is the bringing together of disparate combat capabilities in sequence, over time. This is the essence of operational art. Shaping is the way to use the means at hand to accomplish an end within the constraints and restrictions of the military and political environment” (Newell 1994, 47). The simulation would facilitate portraying the movements and actions of the units involved, but would not settle battles. Battles would be decided through debate, discussion, and comparison of potential enemy courses of action (COAs) to prescribe friendly actions.

While this may sound arbitrary the fact that the operational level is not necessarily decided by attrition must be addressed. Current simulations are settled by mathematical problems that assess the attrition of forces. Commanders and staffs should argue and debate the merits of their decisions based not on the attrition of the computer but on the intent of the commander, the potential for continued development of the situation, and the overall impacts of their decisions. Attrition-based models work well at the tactical level, but because of the multitude of less easily defined factors that come in to play at the operational level, politics, leader personalities, will, allies, and others, the equation

should not be solved by math. The opposing force (OPFOR) would be senior mentors and subject matter experts (SMEs) from the regions involved. Particular attention would be paid to educating and training subject matter experts who are not constrained by US doctrine and are willing and capable to act as adaptive enemies.

The CCTP could be incorporated into the training path of division and higher units, potential ARFOR, and JTF headquarters that have completed BCTP. Attendees would be commanders and key staffs. The seminar, practical exercise (PE) path used by the BCTP could be used. The seminar might focus on education on operational art and the theater of operations to be used in the practical exercise. This seminar would last five days and could be executed at home station. The primary instructors would be one operational art instructor and one theater SME. The practical exercise could be conducted at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, or at a unit's home station in a facility similar to BCTP. The practical exercise or campaign should comprise several weeks of game time, with an accelerated daily time schedule to facilitate completing the training in approximately twelve training days. The time factor alone would help leaders take a more operational approach to the fight than the usual ninety-six hour tactical slugfest. Understanding that time is undoubtedly the most valuable training resource that the Army has, the Army cannot discount the impact of time at the operational level. While critical time factors at the tactical level can be minutes, hours, and days, these stretch out to days, week, and even months at the operational level. Recent history from Desert Shield and Desert Storm to the operations in Afghanistan is proof that leaders must understand the critical aspects of time at the operational level. Unfortunately the only way to truly understand that is to exercise a model in as close to a real-time situation as possible.

Using a five-phased operation as a template, each phase taking approximately two days of execution, the exercise could be conducted in twelve training days. The first day would consist of a review of the theater situation and any updates. Day two through eleven should focus on a phases of the operation. Phases will last approximately a day and one-half with a half-day for in-progress after-action reviews. Obviously some phases could last longer, but the goal is to complete the exercise in twelve days. Day 12 would be the final after-action review and redeployment to home station.

Conclusion

This paper began by asking how the Army could better train at the operational level. The initial conclusions have been that the Army has a sound training doctrine and has taken some measures to address operational-level training. Where this training doctrine falls short is in applying itself to the operational level. That is the operational-level training, when it occurs, is a result of farsighted leaders and not because it is inherent in the doctrine. Another way to put it would be to say that when the Army trains at the operational level it is not because Army training doctrine is driving it to do it as the next logical step in the training path it is because a leader decided it was the right thing to do.

What this paper has also determined, however, is that the Army's focus is on the tactical level and its attrition-based simulations as a means of validating staff and leader training. Of the above recommendations both are aimed at field grade leaders, both in the schoolhouse and on staffs. While these recommendations may not be cure-alls to the lack of emphasis on operational-level training, they are an attempt to make the Army's leaders address the shortcoming. Despite the Army's poor record on operational-level training, it

has a pretty good scorecard. That is not to say the Army has been perfect. Only through constant assessment and evaluation, the fifth step in its own training doctrine, will the Army continue to improve as a combat ready and viable force.

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